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BATMAN



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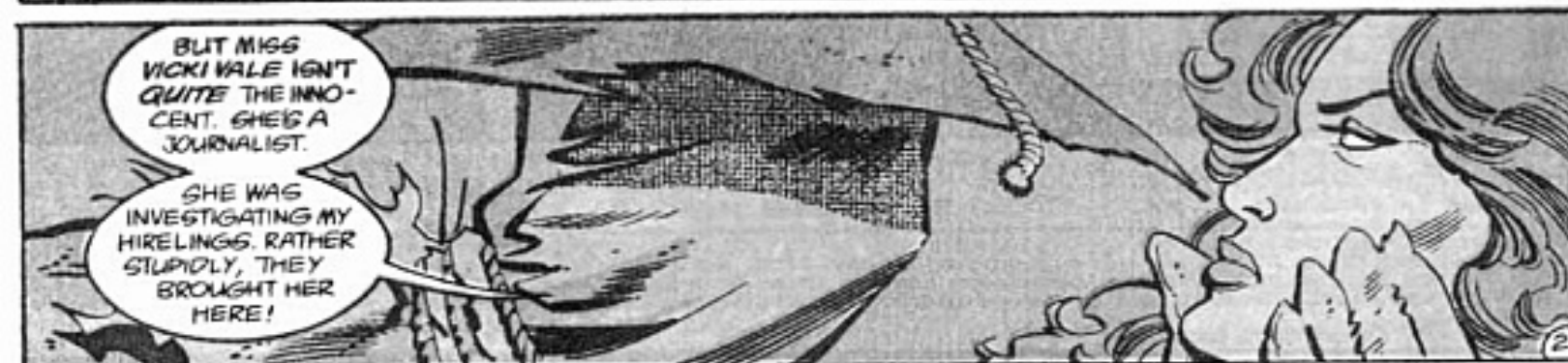
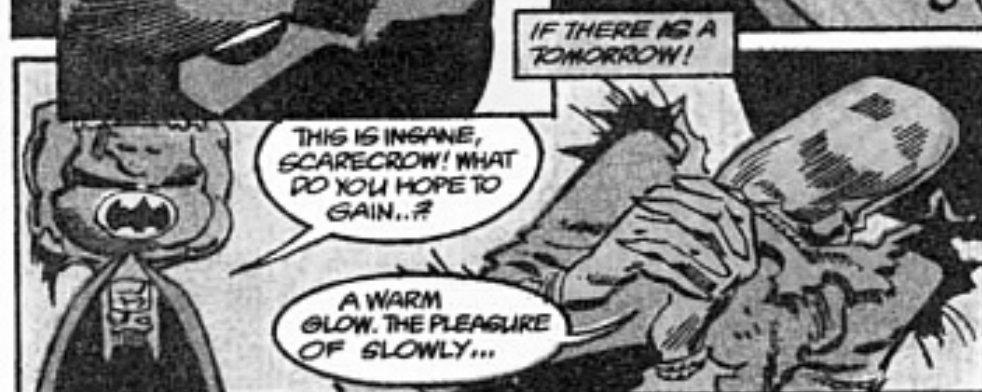
GRANT • BREYFOGLE • MITCHELL

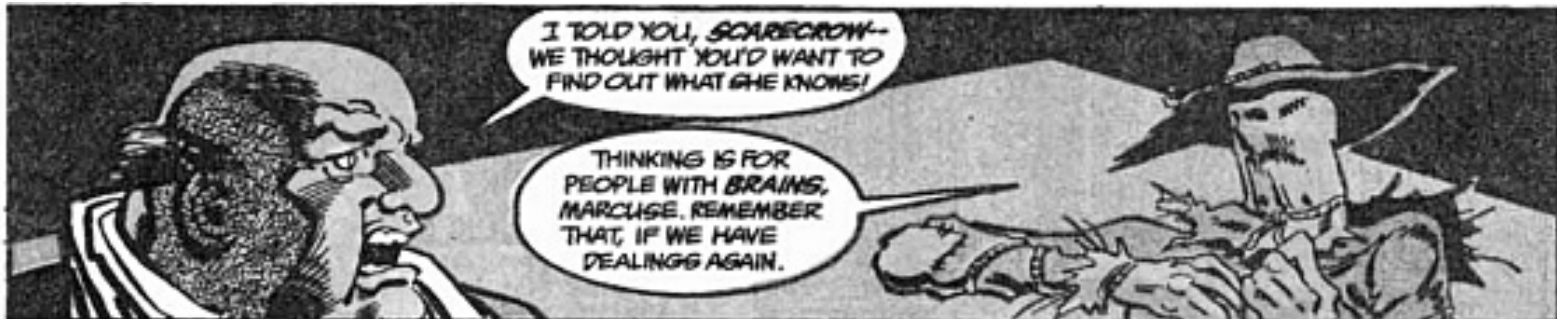


"The wearer of the mask
partakes of the power of
the divinity or spirit which
the mask symbolizes..."
—ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
MAGIC AND SUPERSTITION

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"YEARS LATER IT WAS **WHIM** CAUSED ME TO PULL THAT GUN IN MY PSYCHOLOGY CLASS.

BLAM!

CRASH

"AND THE FEAR IT PRODUCED WAS SWEETER THAN ANYTHING I HAD KNOWN!

"AND WHEN FINALLY--PROVOKED BY THOSE BOORS WHO THOUGHT THEMSELVES MY **BETTER**-- I DECIDED ON A LIFE OF CRIME--"

IT WAS **WHIM** MADE ME CHOOSE THE NAME AND IMAGE THEY HAD SO CALLOUSLY CAST ON ME--

THE SCARECROW-- A BEING WHOSE SOLE RAISON D'ETRE IS TO FRIGHTEN!

I'VE LEARNED TO FOLLOW MY **WHIM**, BATMAN!

SO FAR, IN FACT, THAT I'VE CREATED A HYPNOTIC DRUG.

THAT'S WHAT CAUSED NORMAL PEOPLE TO KILL. HARD TO BELIEVE.

ON THE CONTRARY. IT WAS SIMPLE. I MERELY MAILED CHRISTMAS CARDS IMPREGNATED WITH THE DRUG, ALONG WITH DEATH MASKS, TO FIFTY RANDOM VICTIMS.

ONCE THE DRUG HAD TIME TO HIT THEM, I TELEPHONED AND SUGGESTED A LITTLE HOLIDAY SLAUGHTER. IF THEY HAD ANY REPRESSED RAGE, ANY DESIRE TO KILL--

--THEY DID!
WHY THE MASKS?



A FURTHER NUDGE TOWARD MAYHEM. WEARING A MASK OFTEN CHANGES THE WEARER'S PERSONALITY--

--ALLOWS ACTS NORMALLY TABOO.

YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THAT.



"MURDER! MADNESS!
GOTHAM QUAKES IN
TERROR!"

"BUT I KNEW THERE WAS
ONE MAN--ONE FEARLESS
DARK KNIGHT WHO
WOULD TRACK ME DOWN..."

FASCINATING,
DON'T YOU THINK,
THAT THE MIND
OF EVERY ONE
OF US SHOULD
HIDE SUCH
ODIOUS EVIL?

WE'LL SEE
WHAT IT DOES TO
YOU LATER...



...AFTER WE'VE
HAD A LITTLE
FUN!

ONE OF HIS
FEAR TOXINS...!
FOOL THAT I
AM, I SHOULD
HAVE REASONED
IT WAS HIM!



TWO

HOLDING
YOUR BREATH
WO'NT DO ANY
GOOD...!

PUFF!



I
THINK YOU'LL
APPRECIATE
THIS ONE, I
CALL IT...



"ARACHNID".



HAVE TO FIGHT
THE EFFECTS...!
HAVE TO TELL
MYSELF...

IT ISN'T
REAL--



TEN THOU BONUS
THAT MANIAC PROMISED
US BETTER THAN
SELLIN' FURS ANY--

HUH?

PHAT

DIE!
DIE!

IT'S A
DOUBLE-CROSS!
THAT'S THE
SCARECROW'S
GAS--!

BOSS!
LET HIM GO!
WE'RE
GONNA--

SKREE
EEE
EEE
EEE

SKRAANG

FRUMPH

DANGER
TOXIC WASTE

AAUGHH!

KRANG
SPLASH

IT'S DESERTED!
YOU SURE ABOUT
THIS, KID?

YES. I'M...
MEETING SOME
PEOPLE.

No time to waste. If I am right--if this is
a Scarecrow scam--Batman's in deadly danger!

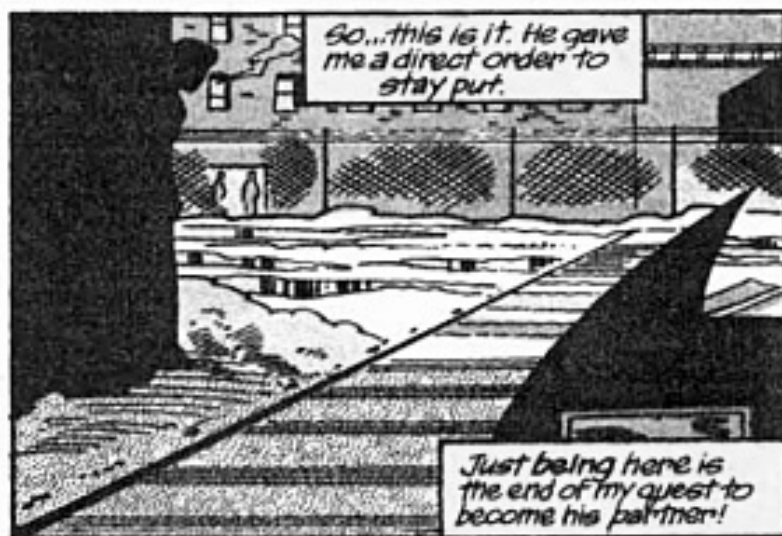


He'd have used the Batmobile. Where would he park it?

Somewhere hidden-- but close enough for a quick getaway--



I'd rather have been wrong!



So...this is it. He gave me a direct order to stay put.

Just being here is the end of my quest to become his partner!



But what else can I do?



Too big and hard for me to tackle. Armed, anyway.

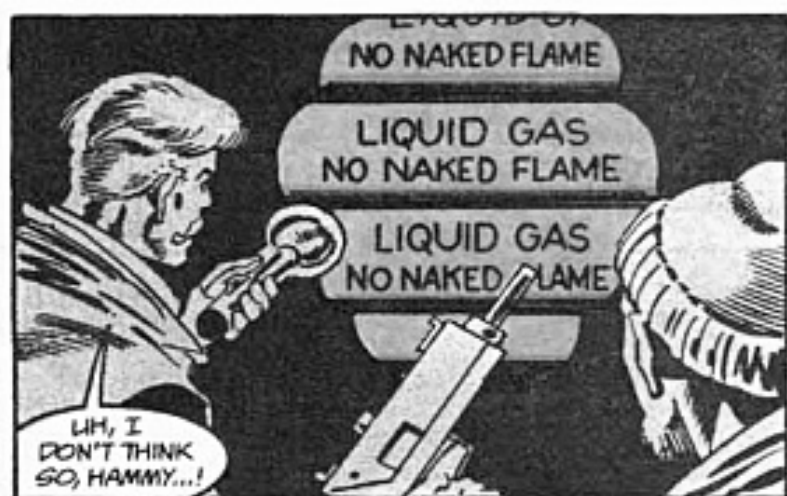
I'll just have to improvise.



WHAT WAS THAT?

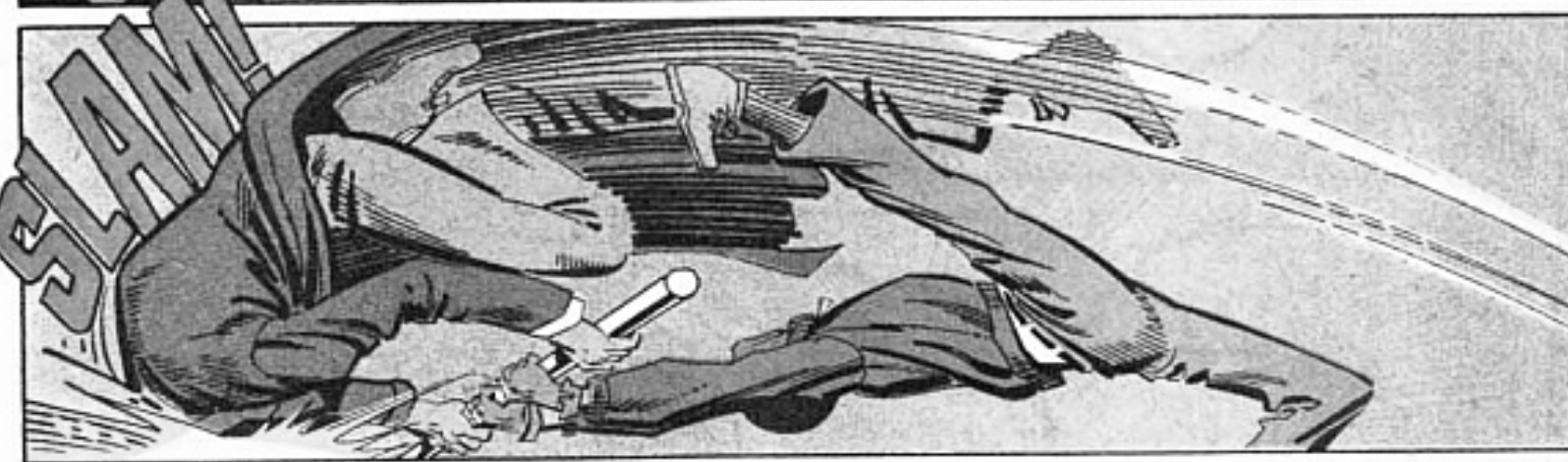
JUST A CAT OR SOMETHIN!

KLANG









It's some sort of fear gas!
"Trauma" he called it! Can
feel it already--

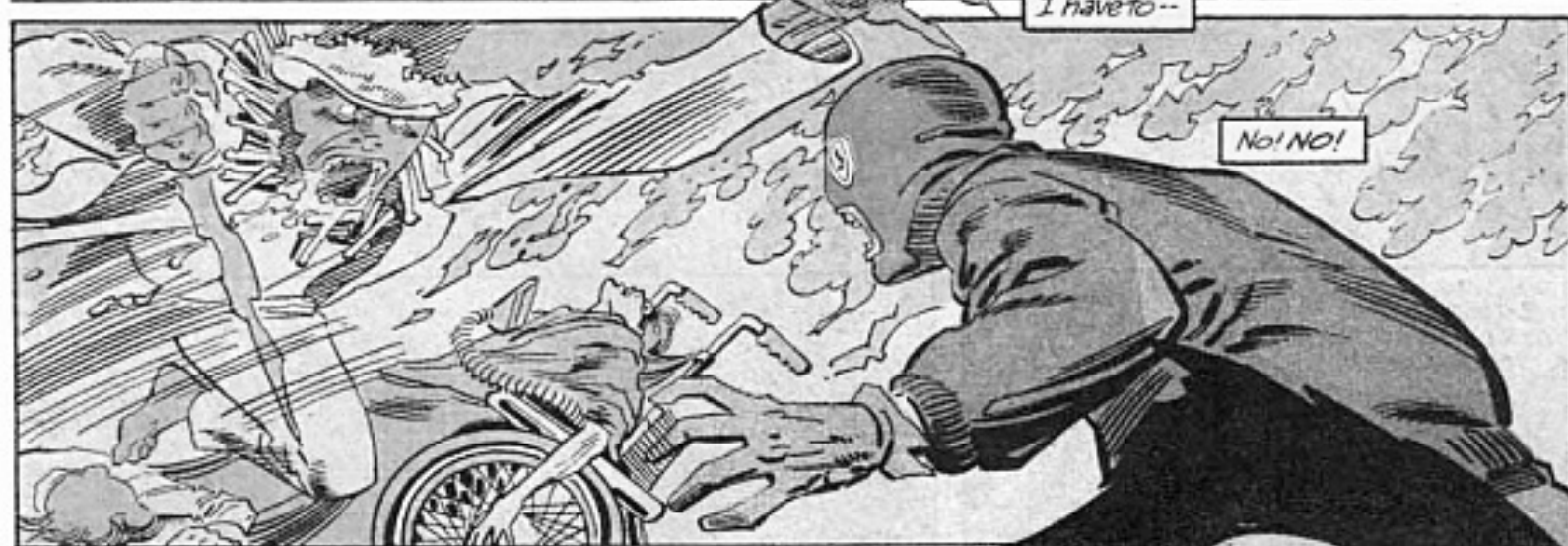
The Obeah Man! Mom--Dad...he's
killing them!



Dejection--failure--
fear...like weights in my
mind, dragging me down--

I have to
fight...!

I have to--



No! NO!



...MY PUPPY! YOU
RAN OVER MY
PUPPY...!

AHH... FEAR!
ITS ESSENCE IS
ALMOST
PALPABLE...!

MERRY
CHRISTMAS,
JONATHAN!

I'M NOT
AFRAID! I'M NOT!
I'M NOT! I'M NOT!

HOORRRRRRRRR



Fear... dirty shadows squeezing my mind... I can't stop the Obeah Man! I'm a failure!

LOOK AT HIM! PARALYZED WITH FEAR!

DON'T FIGHT IT, TIM! LIVE WITH IT! CONFRONT IT!

IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF. BUT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID--

--DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T ACT!

YOU DON'T NEED THE SUIT! YOU DON'T NEED THE MASK!

IT'S IN YOU! YOU MAKE YOURSELF A HERO!

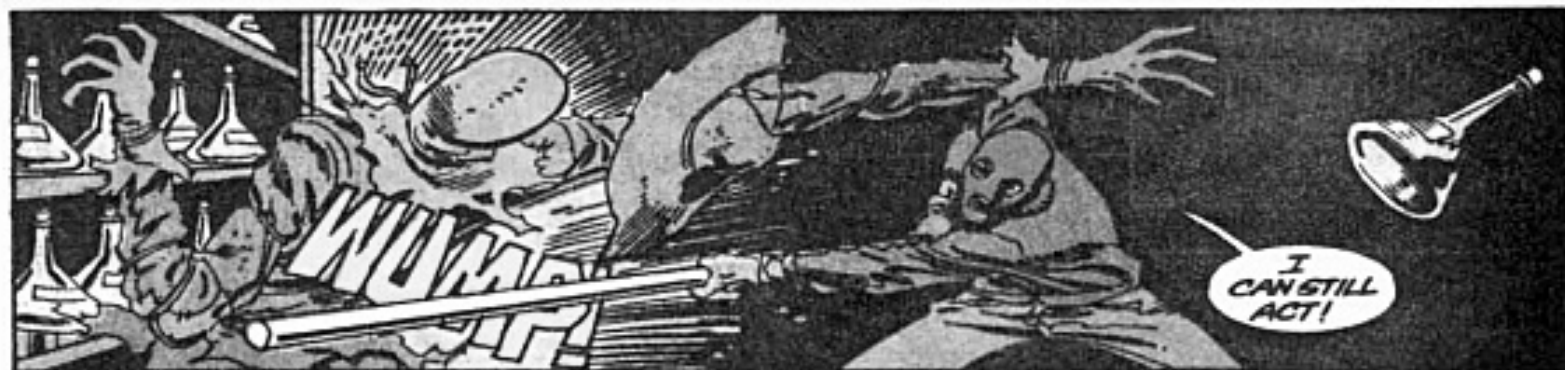


SO... WHAT NOW, BATMAN? "BURIED ALIVE"? "EATEN BY ROACHES... FROM THE INSIDE"?

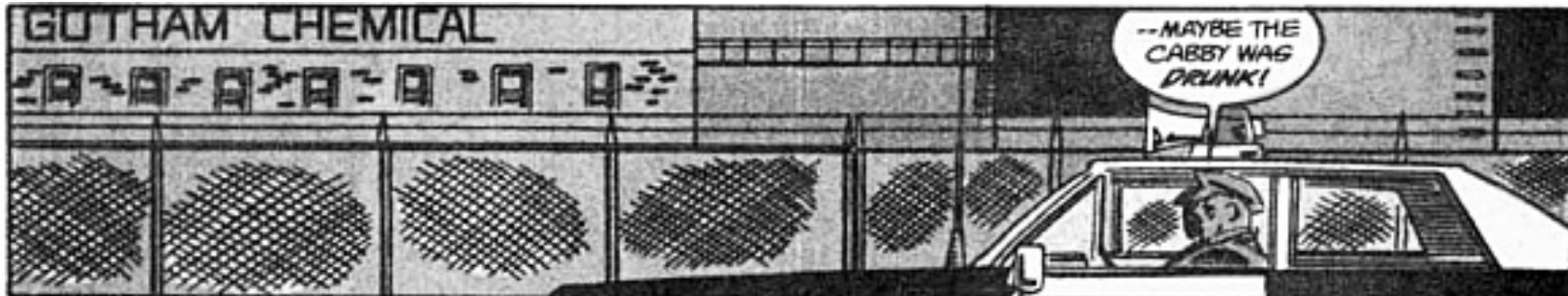
I can do it! I know I can!

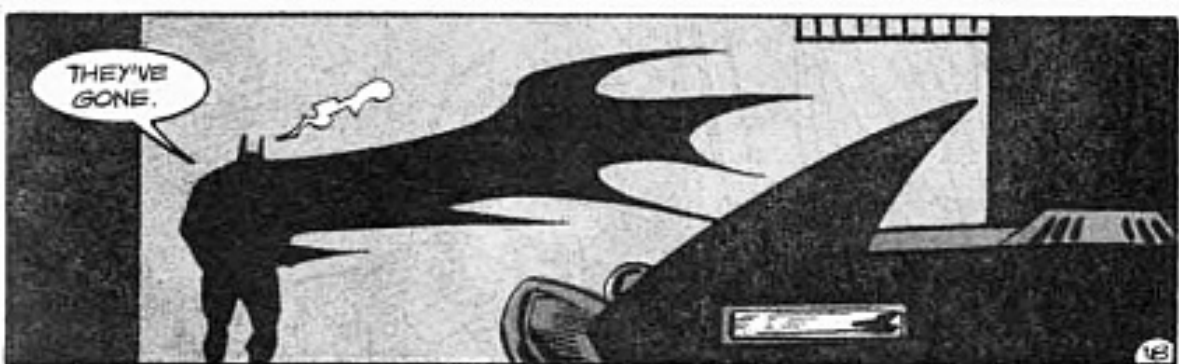
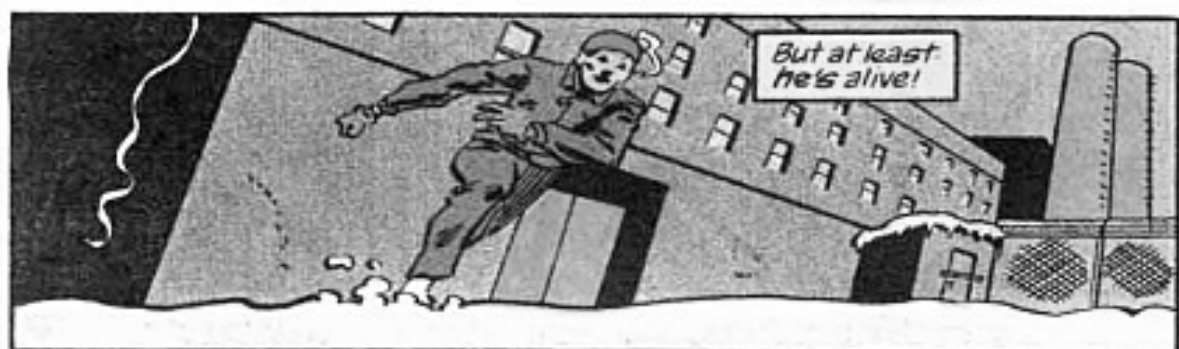


I DON'T CARE IF I AM AFRAID--









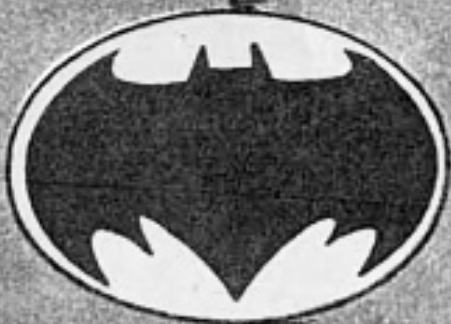




A hero doesn't
need a mask--

--but it
helps.

GENTLEMEN--



IN MEMORY OF
JASON TODD
ROBIN
A GOOD SOLDIER





MEET
THE NEW
ROBIN!

NEXT ISSUE:
"CHOICES"